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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly describes initiation of academic programming in the area of student development and transplantation of that programming into departmental and college curricula. Obvious advantages of this approach include placing student development courses in the hands of staff who know students best, insuring the courses' continued existence, and communicating to students their importance. Some approaches to initiating such a program in an academic unit include: (1) simply approaching a college or department and asking about interest in a course dealing with some aspect of student development; (2) seeking a faculty member who shares one or more interests with student development staff; (3) getting to know faculty socially; (4) taking advantage of fortunate accidents; and (5) organizing a network of persons interested in student development. Some ideas for transferring responsibility for the program once it is initiated are: (1) beginning from the first day of planning to think about abandoning the new program; (2) insuring that at least one faculty member identifies with the course; (3) getting faculty in the cooperating unit to visit the course and discuss it; (4) arranging discussion of the course in a relaxed setting; (5) earning some recognition for the course; (6) obtaining even a small amount of money to support the course; and (7) gaining administrative support. (Author)

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SPAWNING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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Several years ago the U.N.L. Counseling Center decided to adopt as one of its outreach program thrusts a focus on faculty as first level interpersonal resources for students. Several earlier efforts were scattered in various directions, several of which turned out to be unproductive. One of the directions we initiated about three years ago (before I became associated with the Center as director, so I can't take credit) involved offering courses jointly with various academic units. Examples include a course on interviewing for law students, on teaching communication skills to pharmacy majors, and a human services program in Teachers' College.

If we are ever to come closer to fulfilling our mission as a Counseling staff of 7FTE for 21,000 students, we cannot continue to invest the time required to co-teach these courses. We believe in any event that the academic unit awarding credit for the course in each case should be offering the subject matter as a regular part of their curriculum. The department or college seems likely to assume more responsiblity for the program under those conditions. Its continued existence seems more nearly assured. And the message to students seems more clearly that this course is a valuable experience.

For these reasons (and because we find it more exciting to move on to new ventures once we've got one program going), we began to conceive of ourselves as a source of new academic courses and programs which might facilitate student development. Even though this process has not been easy, doing it (in retrospect, at least) seems a lot easier than telling others how to do it. I believe I can abstract (at least at the oh shucks level of confidence) a few generalizations.

1. Simply approaching an academic unit and asking about interest in a course or program the Counseling staff feels to be desirable can meet with a surprisingly positive reception. Even if the first person or so approached is not responsive, persistence often has seemed to pay off in identifying an interested person.
2. Merely making known the interest in starting a course can lead to the discovery of a faculty member with a similar interest.
3. Then, of course, getting to know as wide a range of faculty as possible on a social basis increases the likelihood of finding a person with an interest to match the program you're trying to initiate.
4. Serendipity is your best ally, though. Just taking advantage of fortunate accidents should carry one a great distance.
5. In fact one really useful follow-up to this session could be organization of a network of interested persons who could pool their ideas and approaches that have worked for them in faculty-oriented programs.

Finally one needs to know how to get out from under a program once it is established. I don't have any more answers here than on the point of gaining faculty cooperation, but I can tell you some of the things we've done.

1. Begin from the first day of planning a new project to work out the strategy for its continuation beyond the Center's involvement.
2. Try to insure that there's one faculty member who identifies him/herself with the course.
3. Invite, encourage, plead with, and inveigle faculty in the cooperating department or college to visit the course. If possible, get other faculty to contribute to the course some relevant expertise.
4. Arrange a discussion of the course in a relaxed setting, preferably someone's home, a retreat center, or the like, and followed by a pleasant experience, e.g., a picnic or party of some sort.

5. Earn some recognition for the course; e.g., a student award, a teaching distinction.
6. Obtain some funds, however small, to support some aspect of the course.
7. Get an administrator, i.e., a dean or a chairperson, on record as supporting the course.

While undoubtedly a number of other actions may support the transition from Counseling staff involvement to sole academic responsibility, perhaps the ones I've listed will get you started thinking.